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NO. 5

AUGUST 15, 1905. Marcus Benjamin

NOTE.

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A MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN HENRY BONER

COMPILED AND
EDITED BY . .

MARCUS BENJAMIN

WASHINGTON
1905

John Henry Boner

By Marcus Benjamin, Ph. D.

After a life full of hardship and suffering, John Henry Boner died in the city of Washington on March 6, 1903.

In the hope of preserving the memory of a dear friend and associate in literary work the present writer gladly undertook the preparation of a short sketch of his career in which the story of his life should be told so far as possible in his own words.

The study of his poems revealed more and more the great love that he bore for his native town and for the Old North State, and therefore, on the completion of the sketch, the "South Atlantic Quarterly" was chosen as the best medium for its publication, and to the editor of that periodical, Professor John Spencer Bassett, I am indebted for permission to here reproduce the article in its entirety.

EARLY last autumn, while spending a few days in Richmond, I visited the beautiful cemetery of Hollywood and there, with uncovered head, paid silent homage to the dust of those brave heroes of the Lost Cause whose memory is preserved by that rude pyramid of stones which loving hearts and strong hands have combined to rear to the glory of the military achievements of the Confederate soldiers. Continuing on my way in that silent city of the dead, I saw the memorials of many who bore names famous in the history of the commonwealth and the nation, and then at the extreme

end of the enclosure I found the place where President Davis was laid away. On the banks of the James, overlooking the city he loved so well, and surrounded by those who were dear to him in life, rests the great leader of the Confederacy. Thus are the worthy sons of Virginia honored by their descendants.

A few weeks later I visited Raleigh, and there, while basking in the sunshine in the little square that surrounds the statehouse, my mind wandered back to a bleak and dreary March day, earlier in the year, when the remains of John Henry Boner—North Carolina's first man of letters—were consigned to an unmarked grave in an obscure cemetery in Washington. Like Poe—unappreciated and neglected in life by his own—he awaits the resurrection into fame that will come as surely as it did to that greatest of all American writers. In the hope that it may come soon the following lines are written.

In the old historic town of Salem, North Carolina, Boner was born in 1845. A picture of the actual house in which he first saw the light of day is given in the volume of his poems published after his death, and in that building his first poem was written. Under the title of "Broken and Desolate" he describes "the old home where my youth was spent." In after years he found it "all sadly altered" and "all changed," so that he writes:

> . . . . I pressed my face
> Against the silent wall, then stole
> Away in agony of soul,
> Regretting I had seen the place.

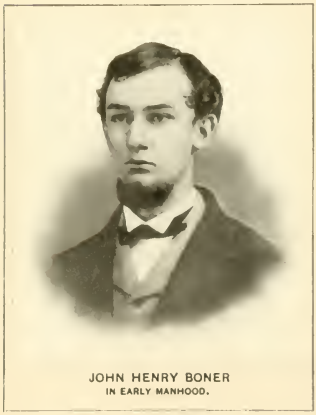
Of his boyhood days the bare fact that he received an "academic education" is all that he told of that period of his existence, for now that he has gone from us comes

the realization that he never said much about himself. Among his poems is "A Memory of Boyhood" in which he describes how—

Floating on the gentle Yadkin in an olden-time canoe,
Singing old plantation ballads—I and charming blue-eyed Sue—
Blue-eyed, golden tressed Sue.

Other stanzas tell of the "ripe, delicious muscadines," "sweetest grapes that ever clustered." But grapes were not all he gathered, for he writes: "sweeter lips were never pressed," and closes with

Years may pass, but I can never cease to dream of blue-eyed Sue
And the morning on the Yadkin in the olden-time canoe—
Blue-eyed, golden tressed Sue.



JOHN HENRY BONER
IN EARLY MANHOOD.

As he grew into manhood he learned the printer's trade and in time was graduated from the composing room into the editorial sanctum, being connected with journals both in Salem and in Asheville. During the reconstruction period he seems to have affiliated with the Republican party, for which indiscretion he was to pay severely, but in extenuation of that course it may be said that he followed the example of many worthy North Carolinians, among whom was Robert M. Douglas, who for many years held important judicial appointments in North Carolina, culminating in his election, in 1899, as

a justice of the Supreme Court of that State. Boner served as reading clerk of the North Carolina Constitutional Convention in 1868 and was chief clerk of the North Carolina House of Representatives in 1869–70.

But there were also other interests, and he tells how, on a still autumn day,

> We walked among the whispering pines.

There it was his misfortune

> To watch those fatal roses bloom
> Upon her cheeks—red, cruel signs—
> But all of love, not of the tomb,
> We spoke among the whispering pines.

It was while in Raleigh he learned to love her

> . . . . Unto whom I cleave
> Loyally and do believe
> Noblest type of womanhood.

And perhaps it was there that he wrote:

> Ah what a perfect night is this
> For sauntering slowly hand in hand—
> Under moon-silvered leaves to stand
> And touch lips brimming with a kiss,
>
> While the warm night air, rich and scent
> Of white magnolia and red rose,
> Languidly sweetens as it blows
> Through the low limbs above you bent.

His political experience seems to have been his undoing at home, for he soon left his native State and entered the civil service in Washington, where, until 1886, he served in the Printing Office, at first as a compositor and then as a proof reader. That he was appreciated by his associates is shown by the fact that in 1878 he was president of Columbia Typographical Union, No. 101, in

which office "he showed executive ability and a thorough knowledge of parliamentary practice, and he gave the Union a conservative and safe administration."

It was during these years that fame as a poet came to gladden his life. His verses of that period were of his own Southland.

> So one who leaves his boyhood's home,
> About the wretched world to roam,
> Led off by visions born of hope
> Inspired by youth's kaleidoscope,
> Will often turn—his visions fled,
> His hopes like storm-beat blossoms dead—
> Toward that place of all the blest,
> Old home, the haven of sweet rest.

Soon after the return of the Democratic party to power Mr. Boner, at the instigation of those who were not willing to forget his political affiliations in his native State, was discharged from the Government service on the ground of offensive partisanship.

Meanwhile, in 1883, his first book of poems, entitled "Whispering Pines," was published in Washington, and the beauty of many of his verses gained for him recognition and appreciation from the literary men of the North, chief among whom was Edmund Clarence Stedman, who has ever extended a friendly hand to younger and worthy authors, and with whom he had formed a pleasant acquaintance through correspondence. In his "Poets of America," published in 1885, Stedman specially mentions Boner in writing of Southern poets, and in describing their work he says, "that they open vistas of the life and spirit of the region." Of no one is this truer than of Boner.

Learning of his having been removed from office, Mr.

Stedman invited Boner to New York City, and soon secured congenial employment for him as one of the staff on the Century Dictionary, then in course of preparation. For a time he aided Mr. Stedman in his great Library of American Literature, and of that service it is recorded, "for the accuracy of the text we are greatly indebted to the friendship and professional skill of Mr. John H. Boner, of the Century Dictionary staff, who has given much of his spare time to the correcting of our page-proofs, and in other ways has been of service to the work."

With the change of scene came new inspirations and he wrote a series of City Sonnets, among which is his "Broadway at Noon." That great thoroughfare he calls the "Niagara of Streets," and says:

> . . . . . Not the roar
> Of ocean on her wildest crags could drown
> The tumult of this torrent; and the prey
> Of tempests, were they cast upon the shore
> From places where the wild waves drew them down
> Could show no stranger wrecks than this Broadway.

Also of this period is his "Our American God, Hustle," which opens with

> All things that follow Nature's course take time,

and then

> . . . . . The crime
> Of haste is man's, who, trampling on law, pleads
> God's ignorance of what the future needs.

His best known poem is "Poe's Cottage at Fordham," which appeared in the *Century Magazine* in November, 1889. I quote the last stanza:

Here through this lowly portal,
Made sacred by his name,
Unheralded immortal
The mortal went and came.
And fate that then denied him,
And envy that decried him,
And malice that belied him,
Have cenotaphed his fame.

His standing as a man of letters received further recognition by his election in, 1888, to membership in the Authors Club in New York. An honor well deserved and gladly conferred upon him.

It may be interesting to recall that about this time Poe's cottage was offered for sale and Boner enthusiastically discussed with the present writer the desirability of organizing a Poe association which should have as its principal object the purchase and preservation of that historic home, but after careful deliberation it was decided that the project was not feasible and it was abandoned.

For a time he served as literary editor of the New York *World*, and of that experience I recall a single incident. Pope Leo was seriously ill and an obituary notice was needed at once. Boner was assigned to the task and it was well on in the morning before he finished it, but it was never used. Boner himself was sleeping in his grave a year or more before the final summons came to the venerable pontiff.

During the years 1892–94 he was connected with the editorial staff of the Standard Dictionary. His experience and excellent judgment made him a valuable addition to that force of literary men. His desk, for a portion of the time, was adjacent to my own, and the friendship that ensued continued till his death. It was at this period that he built the home on Staten Island to which he gave

the name of Cricket Lodge, and he described it as

> . . . . . but a lodge indeed—
> Two end-gables, one end freed
> From rigidity by sweep
> Of a dormer-windowed deep
> Rooftree—such where pigeons preen—
> And the shingles stained moss-green.

In this home, his own,

> On a green and breezy hill
> Overlooking Arthur Kill
> And the Orange Mountains blue
> In their everchanging hue—

he had hoped to pass

> . . . . life's declining years
> Happier than the past has been.

As his work on the Standard Dictionary approached completion, its publishers, recognizing his editorial ability, placed him in control of their well known publication, *The Literary Digest*, over whose columns he continued in charge until 1897. The improved character of that journal, due to his critical judgment and excellent taste, soon became apparent, and has since been maintained. In addition to his regular duties, he prepared a valuable series of brief summaries of American contemporary poetry that attracted much notice.

Conspicuous among Boner's traits of character was that of dogged persistence. He would not give in—he could not—and so, on a matter of no great importance, he declined to agree with his publishers, and rather than yield, he resigned from his editorship.

Then came dark days, and soon

> The wolf came sniffing at my door,
> But the wolf had prowled on my track before,
> And his sniff, sniff, sniff at my lodge door-sill
> Only made me laugh at his devilish will.

Desultory literary work is not very remunerative, and while his poems found ready acceptance with the *Century Magazine*, and he contributed certain articles to such high-class publications as "Appleton's Annual Cyclopedia," still it was not long before—

> And the time came when I laughed no more,
> But glanced with fear at my frail lodge door,
> For now I knew that the wolf at bay
> Sooner or later would have his way.

But his cup was not yet full. Cricket Lodge—his only home—had to be given up. Sickness followed, and then, with nothing but his pride left, there came

> A crash, and my door flew open wide.
> My strength was not as the beast's at my side.
> That night on my hearthstone cold and bare
> He licked his paw and made his lair.

At last, broken in spirit and in health, he appealed to friends in Washington, asking that a place be found for him. A decision of the Civil Service Commission, to the effect that removal from Government employ on the ground of "offensive partisanship" prior to entrance in the service was invalid, fortunately made it possible to restore him to his place as proof reader in the Government Printing Office. His literary associates in New York—members of the Authors Club—were successful in enlisting the powerful aid of Senator Depew, and, in the springtime of 1900, he was welcomed back to his desk by many of his old colleagues.

It soon became apparent that his strength was not even equal to the light work required of him and he began to fail more rapidly. The winter proved a severe one for him, and it was evident that a complete rest was essential for the restoration of his health. A small

pamphlet, entitled "Some New Poems," selected from writings published chiefly in the *Century Magazine*, subsequent to his "Whispering Pines" and most kindly dedicated to the present writer ("whose loyal friendship has been a solace and a help to me in dark days"), furnished the slender purse required for a few months visit to North Carolina.

In May he wrote from the hospital where he had gone for recuperation: "Am going South next week, if possible. In bad shape. Doctor says consumption." A few days and he was able again to hear "the notes of the Southern mocking bird."

> . . . . But you must live in the South,
> Where the clear moon kisses with large cool mouth
> The land she loves, in the secret of night,
> To hear such music—the soul-delight
> Of the Moon-Loved Land.

For a little more than six months he was happy in being

> Back in the Old North State,
> Back to the place of his birth,
> Back through the pines' colonnaded gate
> To the dearest spot on earth.
> No sweeter joy can a star feel
> When into the sky it thrills
> Than the rapture that wings a Tar Heel
> Come back to his native hills.

In the exuberance of his joy at being among his "loved ones in mothernook," he wrote "The Wanderer Back Home," of which the foregoing is the initial stanza. It was published in the Charlotte, North Carolina, *Observer*, of December 15, 1901, and only a few days before he sent the following message to his comrades in Washington: "I am in bed again and am mortally sick. Have a

new doctor who tries to jolly me along." This message came from Raleigh, where much of his time was spent, and of which place he wrote facetiously years before: "I feel quite at home in New York. It reminds me so much of Raleigh." His visit was nearing its end, and to his friends he spoke of "how he loved Raleigh and its people and hoped to spend his last days there," "but not thus the stern fates would."

In January he returned to Washington and tersely announced his arrival with "'And the cat came back!' I go to work tomorrow."

For a little while he was able to continue at his desk, but it soon became apparent that for him

> Night is falling—gently falling, and the silver stars are shining.

With pain that was severe and with suffering that was cruel he struggled against the inevitable through the year with a courage as noble as that shown by those immortal comrades who fought through the Wilderness with Lee. And then in March, 1903, the end came and he realized

> The bliss of that Eternal Rest
> Emancipated souls must know.

For he found

> Reunion with the loved and lost,
> Revealment of the Almighty cause,
> The Unknowable made plain—the cost
> Of knowledge fixed by wondrous laws.

Let me add one more stanza,

> Howe'er it be, one thing I know:
> There is a faith which hath sufficed
> Men mourning in the land of woe—
> A simple faith in Jesus Christ.

Among his earlier poems—doubtlessly written before he left North Carolina—I find the following words:

Where shall my grave be—will a stone
Be raised to mark awhile the spot,
Or will rude strangers, caring not,
Bury a man to them unknown?

MORAVIAN GRAVEYARD
SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

His associates and friends bore him to a lonely grave—as yet unmarked—and there, far from home and from those he loved, he rests. In one of his sweetest poems he tells how

The bells are ringing—Sabbath bells,

and then

. . . . . I hear
The old Moravian bell ring clear,
But see no more—tears fill my eyes.

And then the wish—

> Where'er it be my fate to die,
> Beneath those trees in whose dark shade
> The first loved of my life are laid
> I want to lie.

* * * * * * * *

And what of the man? I have tried to tell, in his own words, so far as possible, the story of the life of my friend Boner, and my effort will not have been in vain if, perchance, my poor endeavor finds favor among the men and women of the Old North State he loved so loyally, and of whose beauties he sung so sweetly, and it may be—I pray that it may be so—that they may bring him home at last to rest in the little Moravian graveyard in Salem.

MORAVIAN GOD'S ACRE
SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

THIS article was published in the April issue of the *Quarterly*, and separates of it were sent quite generally to Mr. Boner's friends in New York and Washington. In its issue of Sunday, May 29, 1904, the *Morning Post* of Raleigh reprinted the entire sketch. Mr. Henry Abbey, Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, and other close friends of Mr. Boner, acknowledged the receipt of the pamphlet with pleasant words of appreciation. Mr. Stedman was, as usual, most sympathetic, and wrote:

I have been reading with deep interest (as you may well understand) your touching and poetic tribute to the memory of that gentlest of minstrels, who caught his music from the Whispering Pines. If the people of his "old North State" don't desire themselves to restore his body to their soil, some of us must do it for them — yes, and place a fitting tablet on his grave.

It was most fortunate that Mr. Stedman's desire to honor the memory of his former associate should almost at its inception have found an equally appreciative desire on the part of Doctor William J. Holland of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, to perpetuate the fame of Mr. Boner. This distinguished scientist was, during his early life, a resident of Salem, and in June, again visited the old town. He aroused renewed interest in the career of his boyhood friend which was of the utmost service.

During a part of the summer, Professor Bassett was in Washington, and advantage was taken of his presence to call a meeting of some of Mr. Boner's friends and associates at the Cosmos Club, and at that meeting the John Henry Boner Memorial was organized with the following officers:

President, Marcus Benjamin, Editor, U. S. National Museum; Vice-President, Charles W. Otis, Government Printing Office; Secretary, John Spencer Bassett, Editor, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Durham, North Carolina; and Treasurer, John Franklin Crowell, Director of Intercontinental Correspondence University, Washington City.

It was deemed advisable to secure the active cooperation of some of the better known literary men as well as some influential citizens of Salem, and, accordingly, Doctor Benjamin was authorized to ask the following gentlemen to accept the offices designated:

Honorary President, Edmund Clarence Stedman, author of "Poets of America". Honorary Vice-Presidents, William Jacob Holland, Director of the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; Richard Watson Gilder, Editor of the *Century Magazine*, New York City; Samuel Conrad Lemly, Judge Advocate, U. S. Navy; Edward Rondthaler, Bishop of the Southern

Moravian Province, Salem, North Carolina; John William Fries, President of the People's National Bank, Salem, North Carolina; and William Allen Blair, President of the Wachovia Historical Society, Salem, North Carolina.

Each of these gentlemen very graciously accepted the office to which he had been chosen and to each one of them sincere appreciation is justly due for his consistent efforts in making the Memorial a success.

A circular letter was drafted and it received the approval of Mr. Stedman and Mr. Gilder early in November and then, with some misgiving, a few copies were sent out.

CEDAR AVENUE
LEADING FROM THE CHURCH TO THE GRAVEYARD
SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

The circular was as follows:

The John Henry Boner Memorial.

NORTH Carolina's first man of letters, JOHN HENRY BONER, died in Washington in March, 1903, and was buried "far from home and far from those he loved best, in a lonely grave—as yet unmarked" in the Congressional Cemetery. A year later there appeared in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, published in North Carolina, an appreciation of his career from which the following quotation is taken:

In one of his sweetest poems he tells how

> The bells are ringing—Sabbath bells,

and then—

> . . . . . I hear
> The old Moravian bell ring clear,
> But see no more—tears fill my eyes,

and then the wish—

> Where'er it be my fate to die,
> Beneath those trees in whose dark shade
> The first loved of my life are laid
> I want to lie.

A number of letters from his friends urging that this "wish" so clearly expressed might be carried out, and especially one from Mr. EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN in which he wrote "Yes, and place a fitting tablet over his grave" led to a meeting during the past summer of his friends and associates in Washington who then organized a

John H. Boner.

[The above portrait is from "Boner's Lyrics" and appears through the courtesy of the Neale Publishing Company of Washington and New York.]

JOHN HENRY BONER MEMORIAL, having as its chief objects the removal of Mr. Boner's remains to the Moravian churchyard in Salem, North Carolina, and the placing of a tablet over his grave.

The active officers chosen were as follows: *President*, MARCUS BENJAMIN, Editor, U. S. National Museum; *Vice-President*, CHARLES W. OTIS, Government Printing Office; *Secretary*, JOHN SPENCER BASSETT, Editor, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Durham, N. C.; and *Treasurer*, JOHN FRANKLIN CROWELL, Director of Intercontinental Correspondence University, Washington, D. C. Subsequently the following gentlemen kindly consented to serve the organization in an honorary capacity. *Honorary President*, EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN, author of "Poets of America." *Honorary Vice-Presidents*, WILLIAM JACOB HOLLAND, Director of the Carnegie Museum; RICHARD WATSON GILDER, Editor of the *Century Magazine;* SAMUEL CONRAD LEMLEY, Judge Advocate, U. S. Navy; EDWARD RONDTHALER, Bishop of the Moravian Church; JOHN W. FRIES, President of the Arista Mills Company; and WILLIAM A. BLAIR, Vice-President of the People's National Bank.

The consent for the removal of the remains of Mr. Boner has been obtained from his widow and preliminary arrangements have been consummated for their final interment in the Moravian churchyard in Salem, North Carolina. It is of interest to mention that the burial only of members of the Moravian church is allowed in this cemetery, and in accordance with the time-honored custom of that church no monument other than a simple slab of prescribed size is permitted. The authorities of the cemetery in a recent letter say that Mr. Boner's remains are entitled "to burial in the graveyard here without special permit and without cost except for grave digging and the usual plain head stone."

It remains simply therefore to raise the modest sum of money required for the removal of the body from Washington to Salem and their reinterment there with the customary headstone, It has been estimated that not more than $200 will be required for this purpose, and the committee appointed has the honor to ask the favor of a contribution from you.

All checks should be made payable to Dr. JOHN FRANKLIN CROWELL, treasurer, and sent in the enclosed envelope.

BY return mail the money began to come in, and in amounts more generous than we had dared to hope for. In three days sufficient funds had been received to insure the success of the undertaking.

Mr. Otis at once perfected the arrangements by which the remains of Mr. Boner were prepared for delivery at the railway station on the evening of December 10, 1904, and through the courtesy of Colonel A. B. Andrews, Vice-President of the Southern Railway Company, transportation was obtained as far as Danville.

The subsequent extracts from the newspapers of North Carolina describe very fully the culmination of the Memorial.

Under the title of "HOME AT LAST" the following article, by Mr. W. N. Brockwell, appeared in the *State Journal* of Raleigh, on December 9:

> One of North Carolina's brightest men and sweetest singers is going home next Saturday. He makes the journey to the Old North State for the last time. Life's journey for him was over some time ago, for he died early in March, 1903. I refer to the late John Henry Boner, printer, poet, and man of letters. Like many others of his class, he died poor so far as this world's material stores are concerned, but rich in friends who loved him for his many charming qualities, and it is through the bounty of these friends that he is "going home" at last. The movement to take his remains back to his old home really started on the day when we laid him to rest in an unmarked grave in the Congressional Cemetery.
>
> Mr. Marcus Benjamin, of the National Museum, a life-time and dear friend of the dead poet, took the matter up, and as a result the Boner Memorial Association was formed.
>
> Another most faithful worker in the matter was Mr.

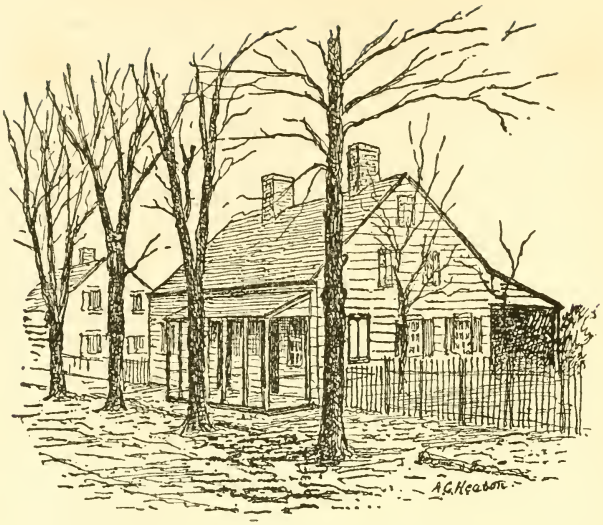
Charles W. Otis, a former co-laborer and warm friend of Mr. Boner in the Government Printing Office.

Among the contributors to the fund were such well-known literary lights as Edmund Clarence Stedman, Richard Watson Gilder, and Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

The remains, accompanied by Mr. Benjamin, will leave here on Saturday night, and on Sunday afternoon, December 11, a service will be held in the Moravian church at Salem—an edifice and a town often mentioned in the bright word painting of Mr. Boner—and then the physical being of the poet will go to its last resting place in the old Moravian burying ground, one of the sweetest and simplest homes of the dead which it has ever been my good fortune to look upon. I shall not go into the details of Mr. Boner's life in this short note, for that will doubtless be treated in the daily press of the State when he arrives "at home," but will say that I knew him quite well as a man and listened to his songs as a poet with charmed attention. Both the knowledge of the man and the beauty of his verse have been helpful to me—have made me a better man; and that is the noblest aim of letters, to make the individual better and through the individual to improve the world—the great mass of humanity. I rejoice that this son of song, of whom North Carolinians may well be proud, is going back to "the dearest place on earth," as he once described his old home; for I recall these beautiful lines from one of his poems as tenderly expressing his desire to rest in the bosom of his native sod:

> Where'er it be my fate to die,
> Beneath those trees in whose dark shade
> The first loved of my life are laid
> I want to lie.

Through the love of unchanging friends this wish is about to be gratified.



THE BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN HENRY BONER

SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

[The above illustration is from "Boner's Lyrics" and appears through the courtesy of the Neale Publishing Company of Washington and New York.]

THE evening of Saturday, December 10, was bitterly cold in Washington, but a delegation of Mr. Boner's associates of the Government Printing Office, led by his faithful friend, Mr. Otis, gathered at the station to bid a last fairwell to the remains of their comrade, which, accompanied by Doctor Benjamin, the chosen representative of the MEMORIAL, left for the South by a belated train at nearly midnight. The warm sunshine of a beautiful morning came as a Sunday benison and the journey was soon over. At the station in Winston, Mr. Blair, Mr. Fries, and other members of the Wachovia Historical Society, the Mayor and Aldermen of the two cities, the editors of the two daily journals, friends of the deceased poet, and many citizens met the remains and its attendant.

The memorial services took place in the afternoon at 3.30 o'clock, and of them full and appreciative accounts were published in *The Twin-City Daily Sentinel* of December 12, and in *The Winston-Salem Journal* of December 13, as well as shorter notices in the Raleigh *News and Observer*, the Charlotte *Daily Observer*, and the Durham *Sun*.

The account in the *Sentinel* was written by Rev. John H. Clewell, and is as follows:

Laid to Rest Under the Cedars.

At the close of a peaceful Sabbath day, while the evening shadows were lengthening, with a great concourse of sympathetic friends gathered near, and with the grave lined with boughs from the cedars about which he wrote so lovingly, the sweet singer was laid to rest.

John Henry Boner died in Washington City in March, 1903. He was buried in the Congressional

cemetery, and soon after his death friends and admirers agitated the question of erecting a suitable monument to his memory. The project was received with favor by many distinguished literary men, among whom were Dr. Marcus Benjamin, Dr. William J. Holland, Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman. An asso-

MORAVIAN CHURCH
SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

ciation was formed and it was decided to remove the remains to his native home, the place he loved so well, and about which some of his most tender verses were written. The necessary funds were readily contributed, and all arrangements made for the burial in the Moravian graveyard in Salem.

Dr. Marcus Benjamin, editor of the publications of the U. S. National Museum, a warm personal friend,

was requested to accompany the remains. They left Washington City Saturday evening, arriving in Winston-Salem on Sunday morning.

Sunday afternoon the old bell in the belfry of the Home church rang out its invitation to the many friends to gather for the purpose of paying a last sad tribute to the departed.

The auditorium was filled to its utmost capacity, ground floor and galleries. The service was conducted by Bishop Rondthaler and on either side sat Dr. Benjamin and Mr. W. A. Blair. On the upper platform were seated Governor Glenn, together with Reverends Clewell, Hall, Pfohl, Cocke, Watts, Lilly, Barnhardt, and Conrad. In the audience were gathered a number of the relatives of the deceased and also friends from other sections as well as representatives from all parts of our city.

A brief history of the life of the deceased was given by Bishop Rondthaler, embodying the following facts:

John Henry Boner was born in Salem in 1845. He spent his early years in his native town, receiving an academic education. He grew into manhood and learned the printers' trade, graduating from the composing room into the editorial sanctum. He was connected with several papers in Winston-Salem and in Asheville and was also associated with several State offices at Raleigh. Later he removed to Washington and to New York, and in these two cities he spent the remainder of his life. He held offices under the government in Washington, and in New York was connected with the publication of the Library of American Literature and the Century Dictionary. In addition to the two volumes of poetery, Whispering Pines and Boner's Lyrics, he wrote for the *Century* and other magazines.

Bishop Rondthaler was followed by Doctor Benjamin who spoke as follows:

In the little volumes of poems entitled Whispering Pines there will be found these words:

With half-shut eyes I dimly see
A picture dear as life to me—
  The place where I was born appears—
A little town with grassy ways
  And shady streets, where life hums low,
  (A place where world-worn men might go
To calmly close their fading days).

One simple spire points to the skies
  Above the leafy trees. I hear
  The old Moravian bell ring clear,
But see no more—tears fill my eyes.

The poem closes with the pathetic wish, so characteristic of those of Southern birth,

  But by God's good grace,
Where'er it be my fate to die,
  Beneath those trees in whose dark shade
  The first loved of my life are laid
I want to lie.

It is in consideration of this wish, so clearly expressed, that, on behalf of the many friends and admirers of John Henry Boner I have the very great honor of transferring to your custody the remains of him who has been so appropriately described as "North Carolina's first man of letters."

This action has been made possible through the interest of his fellow-workers in literature in New York and Washington and a single admirer from Virginia who, I am glad to add, bears the illustrious name of Lee. It is well, I think, to call your particular attention to those who have made possible the home-coming of this hero of letters, for too often in this ever busy world of ours we fail to appreciate our own, and only recognize their worth when strangers, as it were, make it apparent.

Let me specially emphasize, therefore, the recognition accorded to John Henry Boner by his fellow poets. Edmund Clarence Stedman, who has honored

this MEMORIAL by his service as honorary president, spoke of Boner as "that gentlest of minstrels who caught his music from the whispering pines." Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who shares with Mr. Stedman the highest rank among living American poets, has borne pleasant testimony to the excellence of Boner's verse; Richard Watson Gilder lent his name and influence to this work and wrote, "Blessed be those who do good to the poets—living or dead"; and Henry Abbey, also a poet and a friend as well, wrote: "It was given to Boner to make one poem of great excellence, his lines on 'Poe's Cottage at Fordham;'" John Hay, who won his first laurels as a poet long before he achieved fame as the foremost diplomat of his time; Robert Underwood Johnson, Clinton Scollard, and John Vance Cheney, sweet singers and able writers, and S. G. W. Benjamin, known for his verse and clever contributions in prose, are among those who have made this MEMORIAL a success.

Among the more distinctive literary men from whom contributions have been received are Henry M. Alden, the veteran editor of Harper's Magazine; Dr. I. K. Funk, the editor in chief of the Standard Dictionary, and John D. Champlin, Arthur E. Bostwick, and Frank Huntington, friends and associates of Boner on that great work, and Henry S. Brooks and John Uri Lloyd, both of whom are well known authors; President D. C. Gilman, long of the Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. William J. Holland, of the Carnegie Museum, distinguished as educators and men of of affairs; Frank W. Hackett, for a time assistant secretary of the Navy, and Theodore L. DeVinne, America's foremost printer, are included in the list.

To the foregoing should also be added the names of the following generous contributors: Franklin H. Giddings, eminent authority on sociology and teacher; Francis H. Stoddard, able critic and university professor; Stephen H. Thayer, poet and essayist; Homer

Greene, a writer of pleasing fiction; Charles Henry Jones, editor and author; George Lansing Raymond, teacher of aesthetics and writer of text books; and Andrew Carnegie, author of "Triumphant Democracy", and philanthropist into two continents.

You will do well, it seems to me, to cherish the name of these liberal donors who have so graciously honored the memory of a son of North Carolina.

Only yesterday while reading one of the weekly literary journals I found the following encomiums on Boner's Lyrics: Bliss Carman wrote, "I think the sonnets are fine, stirring, manly, and superbly executed"; Maurice Thompson is quoted as saying, "Such verse is an embodied charm, a joy forever"; while Mark Twain said, "I wish I could put into words my admiration of it and my delight in it without seeming extravagance."

I have yet another duty to perform. His associates in the government printing office have commissioned me to place this wreath of laurel over the grave of their colleague. All honor to these worthy knights of the golden rule, for in life they did to him as they would should be done unto them and in death they have not forgotten him.

And now for the man himself: John Henry Boner was born in Salem in 1845. After various experiences he went to New York early in the eighties of the last century and thereafter devoted himself exclusively to literary work. It was while so engaged that I first met him and for a time we occupied adjacent desks, I found him always an honorable gentleman, somewhat reserved and rather dignified, slow to make friends but when once he gave his friendship it was for all time. It it not for me to laud him and yet his very faults were even virtues, for with the true instincts of a gentleman, honor was more to him than money and he accepted poverty rather than do those things which were contrary to his own conscience and we loved him for it. He was gentle and kind and tender with

women—not weak or mawkish—but with that innate reverence that all true men have for their wives, mothers, and sweethearts. He bore pain and suffering with Christian fortitude, and his last days were full of sorrow and yet his cheerful optimism continued to the last.

When the end came rather than entail trouble on those who had cared for him he simply asked to be laid away where it could be done with the least inconvenience. He died in Washington City in March, 1903.

Tennyson has written "For a poet cannot die," and so now that we have brought him back to you, I beg that you will proudly guard the remains and lovingly cherish the memory of him who was ever so loyal to his people and to his state. He is with you once more and in his own words I leave him:

Back in the Old North State,
  Back to the place of his birth,
Back through the pines' colonnaded gate
  To the dearest spot on earth.

Governor Glenn followed with a brief but very earnest and sympathetic address. He paid a tender tribute to the memory of the departed, claiming that he was truly a great man. It is not necessary to be a great military leader or a great statesman to be a great man. Whatever the calling, a man is great if he is true to his convictions and does good for others. The governor continued his remarks by saying he did not wonder that Boner wished to be brought home and to be buried in the beautiful Salem graveyard. "If there is one thing for which I envy the Salem Moravians it is their graveyard, in which Boner is about to be buried."

Mr. W. A. Blair followed by reading a few selections from the poems of the deceased. This part of

the memorial service had a marked effect upon the audience, many being deeply moved as the reading progressed.

The services within the church being concluded the procession moved to the front of the sanctuary, and led by the church band, moved up Church street into Cedar avenue. Many recalled the poem which Boner wrote concerning this same spot, in which he says:

CEDAR AVENUE, LOOKING TOWARD THE CHURCH
SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

Full many a peaceful place I've seen,
  But the most restful spot I know
  Is one where thick dark cedars grow
In an old graveyard cool and green.

The way to the sequestered place
  Is arched with boughs of that sad tree,
  And there the trivial step of glee
Must sober to a pensive pace.

Gathered around the open grave the large concourse of friends listened to the burial service which was read by Dr. Clewell. The grave is near the main entrance, just south of the gate. On the casket was a

beautiful wreath given by the Typographical Union of Washington. Representatives of the press of our city stood near the grave, and when Bishop Rondthaler solemnly uttered the words:

"Now to the earth let these remains in hope committed be,"

all reverently bowed their heads as the casket slowly descended into the grave, its final earthly resting place.

A pure white marble slab was placed upon the grave as soon as it was filled, and on this slab is the following inscription, the last line being written of him by his good friend Edmund Clarence Stedman:

JOHN HENRY BONER,
BORN IN SALEM, N. C.,
JANUARY 31, 1845.
DIED IN WASHINGTON, D. C.,
MARCH 6, 1903.

THAT GENTLEST OF MINSTRELS WHO CAUGHT
HIS MUSIC FROM THE WHISPERING PINES.

An excellent description in the Raleigh *News and Observer* (from the pen of Mr. George P. Pell) was supplemented by the following editorial.

John Henry Boner.

That was a peculiarly graceful act of the friends and admirers of the late John Henry Boner, in taking from the simple wish of a bit of his sweet and musical verse the inspiration of honoring his remains by laying them in the old church-yard to which his poet's soul returned again and again as a homing dove circles around its well loved cot.

John Henry Boner was a man whose soul so shone through what he wrote that the words had about them that mystic and gentle sympathy that won for the

writer a love that was, apart from his art, almost personal with those who came under the spell of the simple music of his lines. He was all that an ideal poet should be—wandering in the green places of nature from a city desk, grave almost to sadness in his mien yet buoyantly hopeful, wonderfully tender, with a brave and chivalrous heart, a seeing eye and a pen that touched on homely universal chords with

MORAVIAN GRAVEYARD
MR. BONER'S GRAVE IN THE FOREGROUND ON THE RIGHT

a reverence as soft and as soothing as the cool fingers of a woman's love.

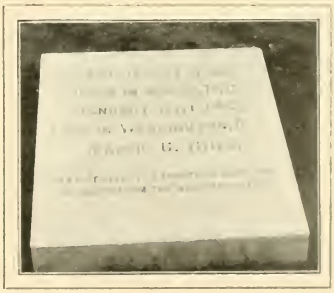
He loved deeply the paths and the shade of the green cedars where he has been laid by the distinguished men whose admiration he had won. It is fitting that for all time they should sigh their restful requiem across his grave. They possibly gave him his first elusive inspiration to the art that he followed with such devotion and which he served with so much

honor. It was beneath them he wished to lie, yet in death he gave up the hope with the sweet self-sacrifice without which he could not have been the poet he was. Yet it is a sad thought that of the men who contributed to carry out his humble wish of burial only one was from the South, and he from Virginia!

There is a lesson in this that should be better learned.

We should not fail in the honors due the souls among us with the gift of song, nor should we drive them off with but a cold regard. John Henry Boner loved the South and North Carolina. It is a bit saddening to think that the hand of the mother should not have given the last caress:

On one of the last days in December, a friend of Mr. Boner's wrote from Salem: "The grave has been nicely tufted and the stone placed. The galax and palms are still green, and when they wither, a wreath of evergreen will be laid in their place."



SOME tributes in verse.

Like Keats, while wasting with the slow disease
That never loses hope, at times his soul
Would try its wings, and fly where sunset seas
Round fairy headlands rhythmically roll.
There, where the clear, white light of truth has birth,
The light he loved, he met Poe's spirit free,
And knew it well: with good work done on earth,
The mind makes strong its own identity.
Thus went and came, while tethered to his clay,
Our poet's soul; but now he bides afar,
And will return not; for his wings display,
Where truth and joy and beauty ever are,
Beyond the sunset and the dying day,
Beyond the moonrise and the evening star.

—HENRY ABBEY.

From the *Century Magazine*, March, 1905.

In life's hard fight this poet did his part:
He was a hero of the mind and heart.
Now rests his body 'neath his own loved skies,
And from his grave "Courage!" his spirit cries.

—RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

From the *News and Observer* of Raleigh, North Carolina, December 24, 1904.

To-night the solemn pines do seem to me
To voice a far more melancholy moan;
Theirs is the stress of sorrow's major tone
And not the cadence of her minor key.
It is their souls' unlanguaged threnody,
Mysterious, wild, across the darkness blown,
For him, whose chords were mated with their own,
Now laid among them where he longed to be.

Into that peaceful city of the dead,
Sad memory leading down its shadowy way,
I pass in spirit to-night with mournful tread:
The old Moravian bell tolls deep and clear,
As on his grave with reverent hand I lay
This simple wreath, and drop this silent tear.

—HENRY JEROME STOCKARD.

From the *Twin-City Daily Sentinel* of Winston-Salem, December 29, 1904.

Sadly—tenderly—lay him down
To his slumbrous, dreamless rest;—
Back to the whispering pines that he loved,
A tired child to his mother's breast.
The bending cedars are stooping near,
To enfold him in sheltering arms—
Safe at last in the shades so dear
From all terrors and mortal harms.

He caught his music from Israfil,
High chords from his tuneful lute;
But, alas! the singer lies pale and still,
His heart strings shattered and mute.
He touched the highest heights, as well,
Where Genius holds her court;
He sounded the deepest depth of hell,
Where angel and demon sport.

Alas for singer! Alas for lay!
Called hence while the moon-tide beam
Just touched his brow with its awful chrism,
Then—vanished in fiery sheen.
Brought back to the colonnaded pines—
Back to his own loved home;
Back where the moon in her glory shines,
On the mound where the shadows lie prone.

High overhead the mocking bird sings,
As he lists to yon deep-toned bell—
Echoing—re-echoing, still it rings
The poet's funeral knell.

—E. A. Lehman.

FINANCIAL Statement.

I have the honor to report that two hundred and thirty-six dollars ($236) have been received to the credit of THE JOHN HENRY BONER MEMORIAL up to date. To this fund the following persons have contributed:

HENRY ABBEY	T. L. DE VINNE	HENRY HOLT
H. M. ALDEN	F. S. DELLENBAUGH	FRANK HUNTINGTON
THOMAS B. ALDRICH	I. K. FUNK	R. U. JOHNSON
S. G. W. BENJAMIN	F. H. GIDDINGS	C. H. JONES
A. E. BOSTWICK	R. W. GILDER	C. G. LEE
R. R. BOWKER	D. C. GILMAN	JOHN URI LLOYD
HENRY S. BROOKS	HOMER GREENE	G. L. RAYMOND
ANDREW CARNEGIE	F. W. HACKETT	CLINTON SCOLLARD
J. D. CHAMPLIN	JOHN HAY	E. C. STEDMAN
J. VANCE CHENEY	WM. J. HOLLAND	F. H. STODDARD
	STEPHEN H. THAYER	

DISBURSEMENTS.

The following disbursements have been made from the above amount:

Printing Circular, - - - - - - -	$ 5.00
Undertaker's services and casket at Washington, to J. William Lee, - - - - - - -	40.00
Correspondence and travel, to Dr. Benjamin, - -	20.00
Undertaker's services at Winston-Salem, to A. C. Vogel & Sons, - - - - - - -	18.50
Tombstone at Winston-Salem, to J. A. Bennett, -	20.00
Expenses connected with Commemorative Services at Winston-Salem, through John W. Fries, - -	10.00
To Mrs. Lottie Boner, wife of deceased, for traveling expenses from Georgia to attend reinterment at Winston-Salem, N. C., - - - - - -	25.00
Copies of "Boner's Lyrics" to subscribers, to the Neale Publishing Company, - - -	31.68
Memorial book to subscribers and others, - -	52.50
Expenses for wrapping and distribution of the same,	8.75
Treasurer's expenses, - - - - - - -	4.57
Total,	$236.00

JOHN FRANKLIN CROWELL,
Treasurer, John Henry Boner Memorial.